



News Release

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2010 MEXICAN WOLF POPULATION SURVEY COMPLETE

A minimum of 50 Mexican wolves were counted in the wild in Arizona and New Mexico at the end of 2010, according to the annual survey completed by the Interagency Field Team. Compared to the 2009 minimum population count of 42 wolves this number demonstrates an increase in the known population in the wild.

"We are encouraged to see growth over last year's numbers in the wild Mexican wolf population. These results reflect the dedication and hard work of the Interagency Field Team," said Benjamin Tuggle, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Southwest Regional Director. "Along with our partners, we continue to demonstrate our commitment to recovery. We are moving forward with our recovery planning effort -- and our strategically planned releases this year -- and staying focused on our goal of having a genetically-viable and sustainable population of wild Mexican wolves in the Southwest."

Surveys are conducted each January of and the results reflect the end of year population for the previous year. This number is considered to be a minimum number of wolves known to be alive. Other non-collared wolves may be present in the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area (BRWRA) but not located during the survey period.

A fixed-wing aircraft and helicopter used radio-telemetry and actual sightings of wolves to confirm 21 wolves in New Mexico, 29 wolves in Arizona. The survey indicated that there were 2 pairs that met the federal definition of breeding pairs at year's end.

Pups born in the summer must survive to December 31 of the given year to be counted as part of the Mexican wolf population. Of the 50 wolves, 14 were wild born pups that survived through the end of the year. This is an increase in the number of pups surviving to the end of the year over the 2009 number of 7. This is also considered a minimum known number since it might not reflect any pups born but not documented.

In previous years, wolves were removed because of livestock depredation, for dispersing outside of the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area or repeated nuisance behavior. No wolves were removed last year. Illegal shooting was the leading cause of documented loss of wolves in 2010.

Mexican wolf recovery is a joint effort by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arizona Game and Fish Department, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, White Mountain Apache Tribe, USDA Forest Service and USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service - Wildlife Services.

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